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GOVERNMENT SPENDS HUGE SUM FOR 'DOCTORS' TO TREAT RUNDOWN FARMS

There Are Now More Than One Thousand County Demonstration Agents And Planters Have Come To Appreciate Their Worth.
--As Described By Robert T. Barry.

Washington, Jan. 25.—A new personage has been born in rural life. He is the agricultural general physician. If a farm is sick and run down, he visits it, diagnoses the cause, and prescribes the remedy.

Older than the Declaration of Independence, but this new medical adviser, the offspring of a more enlightened era of farm life, has become equally indispensable. He is the county farm demonstration agent. Nearly \$2,500,000 of the Government's agricultural extension funds, or more than one-half of the total amount appropriated is used to carry on the work of county agents.

The county agent is charged with the final distribution of information gathered by the Department of Agriculture in half a century. He is the general farm doctor of every neighborhood. There are now more than 1,000 of these agents or physicians and their number grows steadily as the farmers come to appreciate the value of their service. It is only when the farmer is

willing to contribute his share of the expense as a county agent does he attain his full usefulness.

A county agent is a sort of a deputy secretary of agriculture. Properly he is the busy, versatile "doctor" and the Department of Agriculture. Through him the neighborhood, the State and the nation give their help to all the farmers in the county.

This help is varied and the list of the county agent's activities is a long one. He supervises the construction of silos, assists in the importation of pure-bred stock, demonstrates the use of serums for the control of hog cholera, anthrax, blackleg and other animal diseases, furthers the work of tick eradication, plans terracing and drainage systems, gives demonstrations in the use of lime and the mixing of fertilizers, organizes cow-testing associations, promotes the formation of co-operative purchasing and marketing associations and helps the farmers in their bookkeeping.

The county agent is a connecting link between scientific and commercial

agriculture. It is his task to pour over the land the treasures of the once-despised "book-farming."

Agricultural facts were accumulated by the Department of Agriculture by laborious experiment and patient investigation. As Walter H. Page, American Ambassador to Great Britain, said recently, "the department has been reserving an enormous mass of information collected with the people's name which the people are entitled to get."

The agricultural extension law, or, as it is often called, the Smith-Lever act, taps the reservoir. Information that has long lain concealed in the dry pages of Government reports, pamphlets, bulletins and lengthy treatises now is being pumped systematically.

The Government will continue to probe the chemistry of nature and store up discoveries which increase the production and the wealth of the country; but, instead of standing by idly while a few prying souls dig the discoveries out of proxy reports as best they may, the Government now is advertising the contents of its reservoir of farm science vigorously, persistently and systematically.

The appeal is directed straight to the eye and ears of every farmer and every farmer's wife. It is by personal teaching and ocular demonstration, through the county agents, rather than by books and book-talk that results are obtained. A nation-wide system of agricultural instruction has been created to pipe all that the scientists in Washington know out to the farms, where, by State leaders, county agents

and other co-operating workers, it is distributed on a scale hitherto unknown.

Secretary of Agriculture, David H. Houston, visited last fall in Darlington county, South Carolina, a section with which he had become very familiar when a boy.

A young, alert-looking farmer had stopped to water his horses, a pair of sleek bays. The Cabinet officer, of whose identity the South Carolinian had not the remotest suspicion, opened conversation and found that the young man had just closed a deal for his cotton crop.

"How much did you get?" Mr. Houston asked.

"Twenty cents," By way of saying, "Quit your kidding," and yet not putting it just that way, Secretary Houston remarked: "You are getting a good price for cotton at 12 cents a pound."

"Oh, yes," the Southerner responded promptly, "but the Government has shown us how to raise long-staple cotton here and we got 20 cents for it, despite the war."

Mr. Houston takes a pardonable pride in telling this anecdote. It contains the why and wherefore, and hints the almost infinite promise, of the new agricultural extension act.

The Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, Carl Vrooman, talking with the writer the other day, footed up the annual expenditure chargeable to scientific agriculture in DeKalb county, Ill. Mr. Vrooman's State and DeKalb is neighbor to Taswell, his home county. Here are the figures:

Salary, one county demonstration agent	\$ 4,000
Salary, one assistant county demonstration agent	1,800
Rent of quarters, maintenance of automobiles, labor, seed etc.	4,200
Total	\$10,000
This annual outlay of \$10,000 is provided as follows:	
United States Government	\$ 1,200
State of Illinois	1,200
DeKalb county	7,600
Total	\$10,000

The local public provides the greater part of the money. That is, DeKalb county is willing to pay an agricultural specialist the fairly husky salary of \$4,000 a year, and to put up \$3,000 to boot, in order to apply scientific methods upon DeKalb county farms. Is it conceivable that any farming community would countenance such expenditures if it didn't pay big?

The \$1,200, which DeKalb county gets from the Government represents the sum which became available to that county this year under the agricultural extension act. Uncle Sam covers dollar for dollar the sum that the States appropriate for this purpose.

During the present fiscal year, 1915-16, nearly \$5,000,000 is being spent in the furtherance of this enterprise. Of this sum a little more than \$2,000,000 is coming from the United States Treasury; about \$1,200,000 from the various State treasuries; a little less than \$1,000,000 from county moneys; \$225,000 from the State agricultural colleges and the remainder from miscellaneous sources.

Year by year for seven years, more Federal money becomes available under the terms of the agricultural extension act. If the States contribute

the share required of them, more than \$8,000,000 will be spent annually by the Federal Government alone during the fiscal year 1922.

This year's total of \$4,782,270 is divided among the States as follows:

Alabama	\$138,800	Arizona	\$26,440
Arkansas	\$137,633	California	\$90,254
Colorado	\$53,906	Connecticut	\$44,806
Delaware	\$16,659	Florida	\$83,397
Georgia	\$166,378	Idaho	\$34,409
Illinois	\$149,539	Indiana	\$182,962
Iowa	\$229,878	Kentucky	\$121,888
Louisiana	\$107,031	Maine	\$26,078
Maryland	\$57,607	Massachusetts	\$109,890
Montana	\$56,232	Michigan	\$86,630
Minnesota	\$127,721	Mississippi	\$125,149
Missouri	\$114,718	Nebraska	\$115,856
Nevada	\$17,134	N. Hampshire	\$30,426
N. Jersey	\$55,559	New Mexico	\$96,914
New York	\$219,791	N. Carolina	\$117,279
Oklahoma	\$142,182	Oregon	\$104,555
Pennsylvania	\$114,253	Rhode Island	\$23,741
S. Carolina	\$135,934	S. Dakota	\$63,361
Tennessee	\$135,604	Texas	\$231,537
Utah	\$53,410	Vermont	\$48,635
Virginia	\$139,295	Washington	\$81,990
West Virginia	\$121,759	Wisconsin	\$103,960
Wyoming	\$43,641		

The work, however, is not confined to farming alone. The law expressly provides that a part of the money appropriated in accordance with its terms shall be spent in giving to women the same assistance in their problems that the men receive in theirs.

It has been thoroughly realized that the production of crops—even the production of crops at a profit—is not the sole purpose of life in the country. The farmer, it is true, must produce to live but he does not live solely to produce. The comfort, the health, the welfare and the happiness of his family depend on many other things than the yield of his fields and herds.

Nearly 400 women county agents are now at work in fifteen Southern States. They assist the farm women in their territory just as their men colleagues assist the farmers.

Among the principal allotments of this year's extension funds are these: Home demonstration work, \$342,000; boys' club work, \$237,000; movable schools, \$218,000; extension work by specialists, \$148,000; farm management, \$96,000; horticulture, \$58,000; rural organization, \$32,000; agricultural engineering, \$30,000; poultry, \$23,000.

In nearly all of these activities women are directly interested. Home demonstration has directly to do with woman's work. The "movable schools" include not merely groups of men organized to study orcharding and other farm subjects, but also courses in home economics designed especially for rural women. Much of the education work in poultry and dairying deals with the woman's responsibilities on a farm. Canning club work concerns the women almost solely.

Moreover, anything which benefits the children is of vital interest and benefit to rural women. The work for boys' corn clubs, pig clubs and poultry clubs, as well as that in such organizations as the peanut, baby beef and potato clubs for farm boys and farm girls directly touches the home, and hence operates to the interest of rural mothers, daughters and wives.

The work among women and girls in the North and West is directed by ten

women State agents under the general direction of a woman appointed to organize the work throughout this territory. In addition, a large number of men, including many county agents, have a direct part in helping to organize the canning, gardening and other clubs for girls, and in enlisting the services of volunteer women who will act as local and permanent leaders in these activities.

There are over 5,000 women who have volunteered to co-operate with the Department of Agriculture and the State colleges in promoting this work. Many women are giving a large part of their time without compensation. The last available figures show an enrollment of 250,000 young people in the various progressive agricultural clubs under the direction of county agents and women demonstrators, assisted by volunteer experts of both sexes. The volunteer work is increasing in scope, and it is probable that before long 50,000 women will be working in direct co-operation with the Department of Agriculture and the State agricultural agencies to promote the practice of scientific agricultural methods.

Agricultural extension seeks the betterment of agriculture in the interest of the entire rural community, men, women and children. Any activity which increases the profits of the farm reacts to the benefit of the farmer's wife and children. And the introduction of modern methods, plus the application of scientific knowledge, does increase the profits of the farm.



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